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**THE HON. CLIFFORD M. SIFTON'S** speech on the Reciprocity resolutions was a model of carefully prepared argument and the most exhaustive analysis of the subject so far forthcoming from any source. Some of the criticisms directed against him, would appear to have been, and certainly might have been, prepared in advance. We are glad, however, to acquit the Government from any unfairness in this respect. The courtesy, studied moderation and friendly tone of Mr. Sifton was faithfully reflected in Mr. Fisher's reply. It was no light task that fell to the Minister of Agriculture to reply upon the spur of the moment, to the well thought-out arguments of his old colleague, and it would have been unreasonable to expect him to combat them successfully under the circumstances. The real reply has yet to come and it is safe to assume that most of the discussion from the ministerialist side will be devoted to the answering of Mr. Sifton. The assumption that Mr. Sifton has parted with the West, because he has parted with his old colleagues on this subject, may be promptly dismissed as a wish rather than a thought. There is no doubt that he will take a good deal of the West with him. The vision of the great Canadian West as the back yard of the city of Chicago is not attractive to the western farmer, or to any other Canadian. But if Mr. Sifton spoke naturally first and foremost as a western man, he took a very broad national view of the whole question and in our judgment rightly estimated the trend of the new fiscal policy in so far as it will affect Canada's political destiny. That it tends to the ultimate extinction of Canada's national independence seems to be the sober judgment of all thinking, observing men.

**ANTI-COMBINE INVESTIGATION.** **A**CTING upon an exhaustive report from Mr. Justice Cannon, the Hon. Mackenzie King, Minister of Labour, has ordered an investigation into the affairs of the United Shoe Machinery Company under the Anti-Combine Act passed by the last Parliament. The case against the Company, according to the report, is very strong. It is the Canadian representative of a foreign corporation, the United States Machinery Company of Boston, enjoying the protection of Canadian patent rights and using those privileges to restrain and injure trade and commerce.

"It compels all manufacturers of boots and shoes

having contracts with the company or requiring any one of their machines to obtain all their machinery from it, also to buy from the company certain supplies used in the manufacture of boots and shoes. It prevents them from buying machinery that would do the same or better work from other manufacturers or dealers, and in like manner restricts their purchase of supplies. It thus places them at the mercy of the company as regards prices for machinery and supplies, increases the cost of their machinery and supplies, and thus increases the cost of the manufactured article, boots and shoes. By thus increasing the cost of manufacture, the price to the consumer is thereby increased on all the principal lines of boots and shoes. The percentage of such increase the applicants are unable to state, but it must be large, for the extra cost of supplies purchased from the company used in connection with the metallic system alone is between forty and fifty per cent. over the cost of similar supplies in the open market."

By increasing the cost of the manufacture of boots and shoes, the company is also accused of restricting sales and thus injuring both manufacturer and consumer. A fair, intelligent and equitable enforcement of the Anti-Combine law would go far to reconcile consumers generally, to the protective principle and to obviate the constant demand for tariff-tinkering. For a country situated like Canada, protection is a necessity; its only drawbacks are the abuses which the Anti-Combine law was designed to check.

**MONTREAL TRAMWAYS.** **I**N GIVING franchises in a large city such as Montreal, the city

authorities should unquestionably always have some say in the matter. While fixity of tenure is essential to the successful financing of these public utilities, the franchises should be for a reasonable term. Fifty years is preposterously long and practically means a perpetual franchise. There is no knowing what the requirements of Montreal in the way of underground, over-head, or surface roads, may be twenty-five years hence and the hands of posterity should not be tied by the present generation. One thing reasonably certain is that within that period Montreal will be one of the biggest cities on the continent; and will need rapid transit facilities proportioned to its dimensions and population, which no one company may be able to furnish.